



# NEWS RELEASE

## VIRGINIA AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

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### **VIRGINIA'S CROPS THRIVE UNDER WET WEATHER CONDITIONS IN 2004**

The 2004 growing season started off warmer than normal. However, by mid-August hurricanes Bonnie and Charley left Virginia wet and cold. Temperatures quickly recovered to near normal, but heavy rains persisted throughout the rest of the growing season. Virginia's corn, soybean, cotton, and tobacco thrived crops under the wet weather patterns. Near record- breaking corn and record soybean yields have left many farmers looking for storage facilities, according to the Virginia Agricultural Statistics Service's year end report.

Virginia's corn producers harvested an average of 145 bushels per acre for grain this season, 30 bushels higher than the previous year and the second highest yield on record. Corn for grain production is estimated at 52.2 million bushels, up 38 percent from the 2003 production. Corn silage production at 2.7 million tons, was up 14 percent from last year. Acres harvested for silage totaled 135,000, with a yield of 20.0 tons per acre.

Soybean yields averaged a record 39.0 bushels per acre from 530,000 acres. Soybean production is estimated at 20.7 million bushels, 27 percent above the 2003 production.

Cotton production is estimated at 150,000 bales, up 26 percent from last year. The cotton yield for 2004 averaged 889 pounds per acre, up 215 pounds per acre from 2003's 674 pound average.

Flue-cured tobacco yields averaged 2400 pounds per acre, a 710 pound per acre increase from 2003. Virginia's production is expected to total 55.2 million pounds, up 81 percent from 2003. Burley tobacco yields averaged 1850 pounds, up 700 pounds per acre from last year. Burley production is estimated at 11.1 million pounds, up 48 percent from 2003.

Peanut producers harvested an average of 3,250 pounds per acre this season, up 350 pounds per acre from last year. Peanut production is estimated at 104 million pounds, up 9 percent from the 2003 production.

Hay production in Virginia totaled 3.3 million tons, down 5 percent from 2003. All hay yield averaged 2.54 tons per acre down .15 tons from the previous year. Other hay yield averaged 2.40 tons per acre, down 8 percent from last year. Production of other hay is estimated at 2.83 million tons, 5 percent below the 2003 production. Alfalfa acres harvested were 110,000, with a yield of 4.00 tons per acre. Production of alfalfa hay totaled 440 thousand tons, 3 percent below the 2003 production.

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## **U.S. 2004 End Of Year Summary**

All hay production in the U.S. for 2004 is estimated at 158 million tons, down 5 percent from the October 1 forecast but up fractionally from the 2003 total. Area harvested, at 61.9 million acres, is up less than 1 percent from the October forecast but down 2 percent from 2003. The average yield, at 2.55 tons per acre, is down 0.14 tons from October but up 0.06 tons from the previous year.

U.S. production of peanuts in 2004 totaled 4.26 billion pounds, up 3 percent from last year's crop and up 1 percent from the November 1 forecast. Planted area for the U.S., at 1.43 million acres, is up 6 percent from 2003. Harvested area totaled 1.39 million acres, up 6 percent from 2003. The U.S. yield per harvested acre averaged 3,057 pounds, down 102 pounds from 2003.

U.S. Soybean production in 2004 totaled 3.14 billion bushels, the largest U.S. soybean crop in history. This is down slightly from the November forecast but 28 percent above the 2003 level. The average yield per acre is estimated at a record high 42.5 bushels, 0.1 bushel below the November forecast, but 8.6 bushels above the 2003 final yield. Planted area for the Nation, at 75.2 million acres, is up 2 percent from 2003. Soybean growers harvested a total of 74.0 million acres, up 2 percent from last year.

All U.S. tobacco production in 2004 totaled 883 million pounds, virtually unchanged from the October 1 forecast but 10 percent above 2003. Growers harvested 409,060 acres in 2004, down less than 1 percent from the previous forecast and 1 percent below last year. Yield per acre averaged 2,159 pounds, a 3 pound increase from the October forecast and up 207 pounds from 2003.

All U.S. corn for grain production is estimated at 11.8 billion bushels, up less than 1 percent from the November forecast and up 17 percent from the 10.1 billion bushels produced in 2003. The average U.S. grain yield is estimated at 160.4 bushels per acre, 0.2 bushels above the November forecast and up 18.2 bushels from 2003. Both production and yield estimates are the largest on record. The previous record for both was set last year when production was estimated at 10.1 billion bushels and yield was 142.2 bushels per acre.

All U.S. cotton production is estimated at record high 23.0 million bales, up less than 1 percent from last month and 26 percent more than last year's production. Yield is expected to average a record high 846 pounds per acre, up 116 pounds per acre from a year ago. Harvested area, at 13.1 million acres, is down 1 percent from December but 9 percent above 2003.